



Coronavirus Update

Over the last few weeks COVID-19, a novel coronavirus, has been impacting our nation and our state. In order to keep you up to date with what is going on with the coronavirus, I am sending you this special newsletter.

You should be proud of your state and local officials who have been working tirelessly to ensure that we are prepared and have the capacity and resources necessary to handle all of the coronavirus cases that we will see. In order to combat the coronavirus it is important that everyone do their part and stay home unless it is absolutely necessary that you go out. If it is imperative that you go out, please practice social distancing and make sure you are following proper hygiene protocols to ensure that you and your family stay healthy.

Please know as your State Representative, I do not have the authority to issue a "shelter in place" order. The Governor, County Judge, or Mayor are the elected officials that can establish a "shelter in place" order. Therefore, if you feel "shelter in place" is necessary, then let your elected leaders know. If however, you feel a "shelter in place" is going too far and would be detrimental to our economy and way of life, then likewise be sure to let your locally elected leaders know. As citizens who live and work in your respective community, your opinion truly matters.

My staff and I are here to answer any questions you may have about Governor Abbott's disaster declaration, any executive orders the Governor has issued, and any general information about the current situation in our state. So please feel free to give us a call at 512-463-0600, we are here for you. For anyone seeking to volunteer or make a donation of goods, equipment, or services, you can find more information [here](#).

If you would like to receive real-time updates from me and my team, especially now during this pandemic, please click the button below to follow along on Facebook.

Representative Ben Leman Facebook

Governor Abbott's Disaster Declaration

On March 13th, Governor Abbott declared a public health disaster for the State of Texas. By declaring a State of Disaster, a number of actions are triggered by the Governor, including:

- Authorizing the use of all available and necessary state government resources to help manage this situation.
- Activating the state emergency management plan and the State Operations Center to enhance the state's planning and response capabilities.
- Giving the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) the ability to reassign & fully utilize appropriate personnel where they are needed most.
- Providing the immediate ability to move resources around the state, including resources obtained through the Strategic National Stockpile.
- Empowering the Office of the Texas Attorney General (OAG) to pursue cases of price-gouging and ensure that offenders are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Texas' Response

Governor Abbott has issued numerous Executive Orders to aid in the our response to COVID-19. Most notably was his order, in accordance with federal

guidelines issued by the President and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to aid in the state's efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. This order enforced federal social distancing guidelines by ordering the closure of certain business, schools, as well as outlining what establishments could continue to stay open. That order went into effect on March 20th and was originally set to go through April 3rd.

Today, Governor Abbott issued an [Executive Order](#) that renews and amends his previous order. The order from today follows the decision by President Trump and the CDC to enhance social distancing guidelines and extend the deadline for these guidelines to April 30th.

The Executive Order renews and expands the Governor's previous directive to minimize social gatherings and minimize contact with people who are not in the same household. It also renews the Governor's directive to avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, and visiting gyms or massage establishments, and it expands the order to include tattoo studios, piercing studios, and cosmetology salons. In accordance with federal guidelines, people are still prohibited from visiting nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance. Additionally, schools will remain temporarily closed to in-person classroom attendance through May 4, 2020.

To see a complete list of the Executive Orders that have been issued by Governor Abbott, you can visit <https://gov.texas.gov/news>.

SBA Disaster Loan

At the request of Governor Abbott, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has included the entire State of Texas in its Economic Injury Disaster Declaration and granted access to its Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, which will provide long-term, low-interest loans to qualifying businesses across the state.

Small businesses are doing their best to adapt during this time and this assistance will give them the opportunity to keep pushing forward and will hopefully prevent many business owners from having to close their doors.

Texas small businesses who believe they may be eligible for an SBA EIDL should

visit www.sba.gov/disaster where they can directly apply for assistance. The online application is the fastest method to receive a decision about loan eligibility.

Federal Response

President Trump and his administration are working every day to protect the health and well-being of Americans and respond to the coronavirus. This Sunday, President Trump extended the social distancing guidelines until April 30th so that we can continue to stay home and ensure COVID-19 does not continue to spread. In addition to what is currently being done at the federal level for the nation as a whole, President Trump has issued a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Texas. This declaration will open up new sources of funding for individual and public assistance that will help Texans respond to this public health emergency and protect public health and safety.

In addition, Congress passed a \$2 trillion stimulus package to battle the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation. Highlights of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act include:

- \$150 billion for a Coronavirus Relief Fund for state, local and tribal governments, allocated by population proportions.
 - According to FFIS estimates, the State of Texas will receive approximately \$11.2 billion in total.
 - The minimum share for the state to receive is 55% of the total allocation, which is roughly \$6.2 billion.
 - Local governments with populations of at least 500,000 may request a direct payment from the treasury secretary. State allotments are reduced by the local payment, but the portion of a state's allotment that can be provided directly to local governments is capped at 45%. That cap amounts to \$5.06 billion of Texas' total share.
- \$30 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund for states, school districts and higher ed costs related to COVID-19.
- \$45 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund for the immediate response and recovery needs of state and local governments.
- Expands unemployment insurance from three to four months, and provides temporary unemployment compensation of \$600 per week, which is in addition to and the same time as regular state and federal UI benefits. This extra

payment will be excluded when determining eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP.

- \$500 billion lending fund for businesses, cities and states, including \$29 billion for loans to U.S. airlines and related businesses. Stock buybacks and executive compensation would be restricted.
- \$349 billion in low-interest small business loans that could be partially forgiven.
- Direct payments of up to \$1,200 for individual taxpayers and \$500 for each dependent child under 17, phased out when incomes exceed \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for couples filing jointly. Anyone making over \$99,000 would not get a payment (\$198,000 for couples). Money is expected to go out by April 6th.
- \$1.4 billion for deployments of up to 20,000 members of the National Guard, under the direction of the governors of each state, for the next six months.
- \$4.3 billion in additional CDC funding to support federal, state and local public health agencies in their response.
- Extends Real ID deadline for full implementation by states from Oct. 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021.
- \$25 billion for transit systems.
- \$400 million in election security grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus in the 2020 federal election cycle.

Mobile District Office

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and out of an abundance of caution, our mobile district schedule has been suspended until further notice.

Thank you again for taking the time to read our updates. As always, if there is ever anything I can do for you, please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of my staff.

Sincerely,



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State Representative
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